



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

Am

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/693,342	10/20/2000	Patrick McErlean	FKC-103US	8467

23122 7590 05/04/2005
RATNERPRESTIA
P O BOX 980
VALLEY FORGE, PA 19482-0980

EXAMINER

DUONG, THOMAS

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2145

DATE MAILED: 05/04/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/693,342

Applicant(s)

MCERLEAN, PATRICK

Examiner

Thomas Duong

Art Unit

2145

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 December 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3-17, and 19-37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3-16, and 30-37 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 17 and 19-29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>8/18/04</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Request for Continued Examination

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114.
2. Amendment received August 13, 2004 has been entered into record. *Claims 1, 3-17, and 19-37* remain pending.

Response to Amendment

3. This office action is in response to the applicants filed on August 13, 2004. Applicant amended *claims 1, 17, 30, 35-37*. *Claims 1, 3-17, and 19-37* are presented for further consideration and examination.

Allowable Subject Matter

4. *Claims 1, 3-16 and 30-37* are allowed. The claims indicated include limitations that the prior arts of record do not appear to teach or render obvious, hence they are allowed.
5. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:
As presented in the previous office action, Angotti (US005790789) discloses *a method for classifying each incoming electronic messages, distributing them to the human*

operator for response, and storing them in a database for future retrieval and Hall (US006026396A) discloses a method of adding a thread identifier to the original message so that related future correspondence can be associated with the original message. However, the prior arts of record fail to teach or suggest individually or in combination as stated in the independent claims for "means for generating a routing tag, which routing tag includes the respective unique message identifying means associated with said first electronic message; wherein the mail client is arranged to cause said routing tag to be included in the second electronic message and to cause said second electronic message to be sent out of said electronic processing system" and "the classification module being arranged ... wherein said processing includes associating, by means of said respect unique message identifier included in said routing tag, said returned second electronic message, or derivative thereof, with said first electronic message stored in said storage means, and wherein the association between the returned second electronic message, or derivative thereof, and the first electronic message stored in said storage means causes, upon generation of a response message to said first electronic message by said at least one mail client, any response text generated by said one first agent in respect of said first electronic message and any response text included in said returned second electronic message, or derivative thereof, to be included in said response message", and in combination with other limitations as set forth in the independent claims.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 17 and 19-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Angotti et al. (US006182059B1) in view of Hall (US006026396A).

8. With regard to claims 17, Angotti discloses,

- *an electronic message processing system arranged to send and receive electronic messages across a network, in which system received electronic messages are stored in association with respective means for uniquely identifying each received message and are distributed amongst a plurality of first agents, the mail client being arranged to render a first electronic message to a first agent in order that said first agent may prepare an appropriate response to at least part of the rendered electronic message* (Angotti, col.3, lines 25-28, lines 59-63; col.4, lines 10-15; col.5, lines 37-47; col.7, lines 63-67; col.9, lines 8-13; modules 108-112, fig.2A; modules 114a-114c, fig.2B)

Angotti teaches of a classification step for separating the user requests (messages) into requests that can be automatically be responded by the system, that requires human operator assistance or that requires a particular manual handling procedure by human operator. Angotti teaches of a routing

Art Unit: 2145

(distributing) step to forward or deliver the original user request (message) to the human operator for response.

However, Angotti does not explicitly disclose,

- *means, responsive to an input from one of said first agents in respect of a first rendered message, for causing a second electronic message to be generated, said second electronic message being other than a response to said first electronic message and including at least part of said first electronic message;*
- *means for generating a routing tag, which routing tag includes the respective message identifying means associated with said first electronic message;*
- *wherein the mail client is arranged to cause said routing tag to be included in said second electronic message and to cause said second electronic message to be sent out of said electronic processing system.*

Hall teaches,

- *means, responsive to an input from one of said first agents in respect of a first rendered message, for causing a second electronic message to be generated, said second electronic message being other than a response to said first electronic message and including at least part of said first electronic message;*

(Hall, col.3, line 61 – col.4, line 15; col.6, lines 55-59; col.7, lines 21-23)

Hall teaches of adding a thread identifier (routing tag) to the original message so that future correspondence relating to it can be associated with it.

- *means for generating a routing tag, which routing tag includes the respective message identifying means associated with said first electronic message;* (Hall, col.3, line 61 – col.4, line 15; col.6, lines 55-59; col.7, lines 21-23)

Art Unit: 2145

Hall teaches of adding a thread identifier (routing tag) to the original message so that future correspondence relating to it can be associated with it.

- *wherein the mail client is arranged to cause said routing tag to be included in said second electronic message and to cause said second electronic message to be sent out of said electronic processing system.* (Hall, col.3, line 61 – col.4, line 15; col.6, lines 55-59; col.7, lines 21-23)

Hall teaches of adding a thread identifier (routing tag) to the original message so that future correspondence relating to it can be associated with it.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine Angotti reference with Hall reference to reduce the processing power of the system by preventing it from having to reclassify the new message base on the thread identifier which is associated with the original message.

9. With regard to claims 19-23, Angotti and Hall disclose,

- *wherein said routing tag includes means for identifying an agent, or group of agents, associated with said electronic processing system.* (It is well known in the art that this is the equivalent to the "To:" or recipient field in a email message)
- *wherein said routing tag includes means for identifying a class into which said first electronic message is deemed to belong.* (Angotti, col.3, lines 25-28; col.5, lines 37-47; col.7, lines 41-44; col.9, lines 8-13; modules 108-112, fig.2A; modules 114a-114c, fig.2B)

Angotti teaches of a classification step for separating the user requests (messages) into requests that can be automatically be responded by the system,

that requires human operator assistance or that requires a particular manual handling procedure by human operator.

- *wherein the routing tag includes one or more sub-tags, each sub-tag including respective data concerning the first or second electronic message. (Angotti, col.9, lines 44-49; module 116b, fig.2B)*

10. With regard to claims 24-29, Stewart discloses,

- *wherein said at least part of said first electronic message included in said second electronic message is associated with an identification tag. (Hall, col.3, line 61 – col.4, line 15; col.6, lines 55-59; col.7, lines 21-23)*

Hall teaches of adding a thread identifier (routing tag) to the original message so that future correspondence relating to it can be associated with it.

- *wherein said second electronic message further includes a response, created by said first agent, to at least part of said first electronic message. (It is well known in the art to use a mail client to create a new message responding to an original user message; wherein the new message includes at least part of content of the original message)*

- *wherein said response is associated with an identification tag. (Hall, col.3, line 61 – col.4, line 15; col.6, lines 55-59; col.7, lines 21-23)*

Hall teaches of adding a thread identifier (routing tag) to the original message so that future correspondence relating to it can be associated with it.

Response to Arguments

Art Unit: 2145

11. Applicant's arguments with respect to *claims 1, 3-16, and 30-37* have been considered and are deemed persuasive.

Conclusion

12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thomas Duong whose telephone number is 571/272-3911. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:30AM - 4:00PM. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Valencia Martin-Wallace can be reached on 571/272-6159. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703/872-9306 for regular communications and 703/872-9306 for After Final communications.

Thomas Duong (AU2145)

April 29, 2005



VALENCIA MARTIN-WALLACE
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3700